

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Previously Presented): A method of enhancing at least one performance property of an aqueous polymer dispersion comprising at least one water-soluble ionic compound, which comprises

removing at least 50 mol% of the at least one water-soluble ionic compound from the polymer dispersion, and then

adding at least one salt of a monoalkyl or dialkyl ester of a sulfonated dicarboxylic acid.

Claim 2 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 1, wherein the aqueous polymer dispersion is obtained by emulsion polymerization.

Claim 3 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 1, wherein the dispersed polymer in the polymer dispersion is a polymer obtained by free-radical addition polymerization which is synthesized from at least 60% by weight of at least one principal monomer selected from the group consisting of C₁ to C₂₀ alkyl (meth)acrylates, vinyl esters of carboxylic acids comprising up to 20 carbon atoms, vinyl aromatics comprising up to 20 carbon atoms, ethylenically unsaturated nitriles, vinyl halides, vinyl ethers of alcohols comprising 1 to 10 carbon atoms, aliphatic hydrocarbons comprising 2 to 8 carbon atoms and one or two double bonds, and mixtures thereof.

Claim 4 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one water-soluble ionic compound is an ionic emulsifier.

Claim 5 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 1, wherein at least 90 mol% of the at least one water-soluble ionic compound is removed.

Claim 6 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one ionic compound is removed by treating the dispersion with an ion exchanger resin, by diafiltration or by dialysis.

Claim 7 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one salt of a monoalkyl or dialkyl ester of a sulfonated dicarboxylic acid is a dialkyl ester.

Claim 8 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one salt of a monoalkyl or dialkyl ester of a sulfonated dicarboxylic acid is a dialkyl ester of sulfonated succinic acid.

Claim 9 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one salt of a monoalkyl or dialkyl ester of a sulfonated dicarboxylic acid is added in an amount of from 0.01 to 5 parts by weight per 100 parts by weight of the dispersed polymer.

Claims 10-20 (Canceled).

Claim 21 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 6, wherein the at least one ionic compound is removed by treating the dispersion with an ion exchanger resin.

Claim 22 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 6, wherein the at least one ionic compound is removed by diafiltration.

Claim 23 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 6, wherein the at least one ionic compound is removed by dialysis.

Claims 24-25 (Canceled).